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PRESS RELEASE

Coastal resiliency gets flood of cash from BP

Work to reduce storm surge, protect inland property under way

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AUSTIN — Work to beef up the Texas coast against future storm surge is set to begin on more than \$13.2 million worth of projects, announced Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson.

“We’re getting to work now, before the next disaster,” Patterson said. “These projects will reduce future storm surge, protect vital habitat from erosion and restore the feeding grounds for dozens of species of birds, shrimp, red drum, and blue crab.”

Funding for the projects will come from the criminal settlement of the 2010 BP oil spill and was announced Monday by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Board.

The projects include:

• \$4.3 million to purchase the Cade Ranch on Bolivar

This project will add 2,000 acres to the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, protecting estuarine emergent wetlands, tidal flats and coastal habitat in East Galveston Bay through a combination of acquisition and donated easement. This area is internationally recognized for its importance for shorebirds and other migratory bird species.

• \$2.6 million to purchase 99-acres of wetland on West Galveston Island

The Settegast Coastal Heritage Preserve Initiative, awarded to Artist Boat for acquisition of Marquette property north of Stewart Road, will acquire 99-acres of critical bayside, barrier island habitat in the West Galveston Bay complex. As a part of the larger 360-acre Coastal Habitat Preserve Initiative, this investment will protect and enhance essential breeding, nesting, feeding and cover habitat for numerous avian and aquatic species, including protected migratory and endangered bird species injured by the oil spill. The larger tract to be conserved represents the essence of bay coastal margin with a full suite of habitats, including: salt, brackish, intermediate and fresh marsh; tidal flats; upland prairies; and open water.

• \$2 million to protect Virginia Point in Galveston Bay

The Virginia Point Shoreline Protection & Estuarine Restoration Project, awarded to Scenic Galveston for the next phase of a current General Land Office Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act Project, will protect nearly 10,000 feet of fragile shoreline and restore nearly 25 acres of marsh within the 3,000-acre Scenic Galveston Coastal Preserve, one of the largest privately owned contiguous nature preserves on the upper Texas coast.

½ \$1.2 million to protect Oyster Lake shoreline in West Galveston Bay

The Oyster Lake Shoreline Protection & Restoration Project, awarded to Galveston Bay Foundation for the next phase of a current Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act Project, will protect 4,700 feet of fragile shoreline and critical coastal marsh habitat in West Galveston Bay.

½ \$130,000 for Dollar Bay-Moses Lake

The Dollar Bay-Moses Lake Shoreline Enhancement and Restoration Engineering and Design Project, awarded to Galveston Bay Foundation for a current Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act Project, will fund planning work to protect 4,000 feet of fragile bay shoreline along the western shore of Moses Lake and about 30 acres of adjacent coastal marsh habitat in Dollar Bay.

½ \$125,000 for Greens Lake

The Greens Lake Protection and Marsh Restoration Engineering and Design Project, awarded to Ducks Unlimited for a current Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act Project, will pay for the engineering and design documents necessary to protect and restore 5,100 acres of fragile coastal marsh habitat, sea grass, tidal channels and oyster beds in West Galveston Bay.

½ \$1.59 million for Egery Flats Marsh Restoration

The Egery Flats Marsh Restoration Project, awarded to Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, will restore hydrology and reduce salinity to enhance over 600 acres of emergent marsh, submerged aquatic vegetation, and tidal flats at Egery Flats in the Aransas Bay complex near the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

½ \$1.15 million for the Nueces Bay Rookery Islands Project

The Nueces Bay Rookery Islands Project, awarded to Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, will restore and protect more than three acres of important colonial water bird nesting habitat on three rookery islands in Nueces Bay.

These projects were developed in consultation with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and federal resource agencies. Under the allocation formula and other provisions contained in plea agreements, a total of \$203 million will be paid into the Gulf Fund over a five-year period for conservation projects in the state of Texas.

To learn more about the process of identifying restoration projects for funding through the Gulf Fund, and suggest projects for consideration, visit www.restorethetexascoast.org.

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